

**PRESS CONFERENCE:**

**Rear Admiral Gregory Smith, Director of Communications, Deputy Spokesman, Multi-National Corps – Iraq**

**Brigadier General Jeffrey Dorko, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division**

**DATE:**

**November 27, 2007**

**TRANSCRIBED BY:**

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**REPORTERS 1-XX**

**\*REP1 = REPORTER 1**

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**RDML SMITH:** Good afternoon. As-Salāmu `Alaykum. I am joined today by Brigadier General Jeffrey Dorko, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division. General Dorko will discuss current GRD projects and capacity building, a critical component of improving Iraq's infrastructure. I will provide a brief update of continued operations against al-Qaeda here in Iraq and will then turn the remainder of the time to General Dorko, and of course as always, we will be happy to take your questions. Three terrorists recently killed during two coalition force operations have been positively identified. The AQI Emir of Samarra was killed on November 12<sup>th</sup> and both the AQI Emir of Kirkuk and the lead perpetrator of that city's car bombing network were killed on November 21st. We would like to point out that both the Emir of Samarra and the Emir of Kirkuk had been replacements for AQI leaders that had been killed this past August. Abu Tiba, also known as Talal Abd al Aziz or Captain Talal, was the leader of the AQI network operating in Samarra. Abu Tiba assumed command of the network after the previous leader, Haythim Sabah al-Badri, was promoted to oversee terrorist operations in the Salah ad Din province. Al-Badri was killed during coalition force operations east of Samarra August 2nd. Tiba was involved in extortion, kidnapping, planting improvised explosive devices, the movement of foreign

terrorists, and conducting attacks against Iraqi and coalition forces. Tiba was killed during an operation east of Samarra November 12th. Coalition forces were targeting an al-Qaeda headquarters believed to be used as a safe house for foreign terrorists. As the ground forces entered the building, Tiba reached for a suicide vest and was killed before he could detonate that vest. Abu Harith, also known as Abu Tariq, has been a long time al-Qaeda in Iraq leader, most recently operating as the Emir of the AQI network in Kirkuk. Abu Harith replaced Hajji Qasem as the AQI leader in Kirkuk when Qasem was killed by coalition forces August 28th. Abu Nahr was also a leader in the AQI network in Kirkuk. He was believed to be Abu Harith's deputy, a leader in the Kirkuk car bombing network, and was responsible for coordinating numerous attacks against Iraqi and coalition forces. Harith and Nahr were both killed during an operation north of Hawija on November 21st. The ground forces killed both when they did not comply with orders and attempted to draw their weapons. As you can clearly see, al-Qaeda in Iraq retains the capacity to replace leaders killed and captured by Iraqi and coalition forces as we've also seen the Emirs of Tarmiyah, Mosul, Baghdad, and other areas regenerate capability. However, our success against the AQI leadership is placing strains at the top restricting their freedom to maneuver, forcing al-Qaeda members to constantly be in survival mode by its planning for the next attack,

and has clearly eroded the experience level at the senior levels of al-Qaeda's various networks. Concerned local citizens are playing an ever increasing role in countering al-Qaeda in Iraq's overall capability to conduct effective operations. Now 77,000 strong, these brave Iraqis, once terrorized and intimidated by al-Qaeda and other insurgents, are volunteering to support security in their neighborhoods. The volunteers receive basic training, and then patrol their neighborhoods and man checkpoints. The role of the "awakening" groups has had an enormous effect on the security environment and will help bridge the gap while the Iraqi security forces steadily grow in numbers and capability to one day take over this responsibility throughout all of Iraq. And finally, working in cooperation with the security forces are the brave engineers who are committed to rebuilding and improving Iraq's infrastructure. We reported last week that the Qayyarah Bridge had been destroyed by an al-Qaeda in Iraq truck bomb. The bridge, which spans the Tigris River in Iraq's Nineveh Province, was repaired and opened to traffic just three days after the explosion. Working throughout the night, Iraqi and coalition force engineers repaired the span in just over 12 hours. The bridge, which is more than 400 meters in length, is a major part of the economic and social infrastructure in the province. It also serves to connect the main routes between Mosul in the north and Baghdad to the south. Here to talk to you today

about the increasing capacity of Iraq's infrastructure and the role the Gulf Region Division is playing in helping Iraq recover from four plus years of war is its Commander, Brigadier General Jeff Dorko. General Dorko.

**BRIG GEN  
DORKO:**

Good afternoon everyone. I want to thank you all for being here today and I also want to thank Admiral Smith for inviting me and giving me the opportunity to talk to you about the efforts in Iraq in reconstruction over the last year. I'm honored to follow Brigadier General Mike Walsh and join a real dedicated team of U.S. Service members and civilians but, most of all, Iraqi patriots who are banding together to lay the foundation to rebuild this great country. The United States has contributed almost \$14 billion toward Iraq's rebuilding effort completing more than 3,700 projects to help improve the infrastructure and essential services throughout Iraq. In the next year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the Gulf Region Division will continue to forge ahead to improve Iraq's infrastructure. Today I'm not going to try to be comprehensive. Instead I'd like to talk a little bit about what we're contributing specifically in terms of sustainment and technical capacity building using the health care and electrical sectors as examples. You see infrastructure isn't just about roads and bridges and facilities, electric and water treatment plants, brick-and-mortar things you can

touch, it's every bit as important to meet the needs of the Iraqi society and the Iraqi people—as it is anywhere in the world—to focus on operations and management, maintenance and sustainment policies, practices, and procedures that allow those pieces of infrastructure to be effectively and efficiently used to meet the needs of the people of Iraq for years or decades or even generations to come. So as an example, while we're building 142 health care centers for the citizens of Iraq, we're also working with the staffs of those centers to ensure they know how to operate the equipment in the facilities and how to maintain the facilities so they're sure to function at their optimal levels for years to come. Likewise, working with the Ministry of Electricity and improving Iraq's electrical generation, transmission, and distribution systems, we're providing training for workers on operating, monitoring, and maintaining what is a very complex system. Overall our Gulf Region Division Sustainment and Technical Capacity Program is designed to develop the capacity of Iraqis at plant and facility levels. It's a \$345 million program that does things like train folks for the provisioning of supplies and the tools necessary to operate facilities, about the proper use and maintenance of equipment, the proper management and operation of plants to operate them at their optimal levels. And that has a lot of effect throughout the economy not just directly with those facilities that are involved. For example,

I think we have over 470 contracts totaling more than \$200 million that have been awarded to Iraqi businesswomen. Monthly web-based training is ongoing right now where we've trained over 100 engineers on project management skills, on how to repair masonry and concrete, and the fundamentals of design/build/contracting for construction. We've contributed \$33 million in electrical sustainment in terms of safety equipment, cranes, and other tools to help build more reliability into the electrical system. And we've trained more than 690 employees in the Ministry of Water Resources on how to operate and maintain water treatment facilities. I'll jump back specifically again—I wanted to talk a little bit about primary health care facilities that are out in the provinces. And what we do is we train individuals on health care services, operations and maintenance of those facilities, and the administrative duties needed to effectively run those facilities in serving the Iraqi people. And by next summer we'll have trained more than 1,400 Ministry of Health employees related to the health care sector. And it doesn't just stop right there; it's not just training. We're buying trucks that go around and provide a repair capability for these facilities, cargo vans to haul spare parts, administrative hardware and software programs so the administrators of these clinics can manage patient records and take better care of the Iraqi people who come and seek services there. So in the end, I'll

mention that while we're working to physically complete 142 provincial health care facilities that are fully equipped and fully furnished, we're also looking to guarantee the long-term success of those facilities because the operations and sustainment and training for those are what are going to carry those facilities in the years and decades to come. And a quick update if you wanted to know what those 142 health care facilities or what the status is right now. Sixty-nine have been completed and turned over to the Ministry of Health, 21 here in Baghdad. Sixteen provincial health care facilities are expected to be turned over soon. The construction is complete; we're going through final inspections and working on the installation of medical equipment. Another 31 are 90% complete and 10 more are 80% complete. And it's not just health care facilities that are in terms of small clinics that we're working on. We're involved in 28 hospitals across the country, mostly in renovation and additions. But in the case of the Basrah Childrens' Hospital, it's a new facility, a pediatric oncology hospital that will be completed in about a year. And I want to stay on the topic of technical capacity. I'll jump over to the electrical sector. In the electrical sector we're providing apprenticeship programs and technical training, on-the-job training at Ministry of Electricity facilities to include operations training on instruments and controls in what's a very, very complex system as well as the maintenance



of the electrical and mechanical systems and the very complex computer systems that run that system to deliver power all over this country. And it's not just training that's aimed at keeping the plants online. We have mobile training teams that are equipped with spare parts that move to critical plants as necessary to support maintenance operations to keep production capacity online. And it's very revealing, I think, since the last of—last summer where we began at a much lower level, we finally achieved about a 56% availability against national demand in terms of the power that's being produced right now. And it's due in large measure to the great work done by the Ministry of Electricity. Dr. Kareem and his team are out doing projects that are ensuring more generation, that are working on the distribution and the breakout of electricity around the country. We have been involved in projects but I think it's a result of also better systems operations as a result of training that allow planned maintenance to be done and fewer unplanned outages to occur that put a drain on the system. So it's an addition of additional capability to the system but, at the same time, I think there's more and better maintenance taking place and people with more of a vision to the future in terms of keeping the system running in the long term. And these are just two sector examples in the health clinic sector and in the electricity sector of how we're working with our Iraqi partners in the realm of sustainment and

technical capability. We've done similar work with the Oil Ministry and others. We've accomplished a lot but there's still obviously a lot to do in many sectors across the country. And our goal is not just to leave behind brick and mortar and completed facilities but to leave behind the knowledge and the capability to best utilize this infrastructure for the best utilization and the best benefit of the citizens of Iraq. This is a great nation; it's rich in resources. But I've discovered in my short time here that its greatest resource is its people. And as an engineer I can tell you that you have incredible engineer talent in this country. Everywhere I go I ask our Iraqi engineers what the best engineering school in Iraq is and, of course, they all tell me it's the school that they came from. And I can tell you every single one of them are great engineers and you have great engineering institutions here. You're growing great engineers. You have great engineers in the various sectors who are helping to build this infrastructure and helping to partner with us as we go forward to try to create more infrastructure that has staying power and is going to sustain this nation for years to come. I look forward to the next few months in continuing to meet the goals that I've envisioned here a little bit. I invite all of you to come out and see our projects. We'd like—we look forward to showing off and showing you the things that we've done in partnership with the Ministry of Electricity or other ministries and the great progress

that's being made in developing infrastructure and maintaining that infrastructure for future generations. And I sit here ready and available for any questions you might have.

RDML SMITH: Thank you General. I appreciate that. Questions, please. Yes, sir.

REP1: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: This is a question to Admiral Smith. Concerning the awakening troops, do you think the central Euphrates areas need to form awakening troops like happened in Baghdad? Do we need awakening troops in the central Euphrates?

RDML SMITH: I think the decision on the volunteerism of individuals in various neighborhoods is going to be really germane to a couple of issues. One I think is the level of violence and the level of security that's perceived to be needed in those locales so really from one neighborhood to the next to answer your question. And then, more importantly I guess, is to what degree does the Iraqi security forces along with coalition forces already provide sufficient security? So it's hard to answer your question in a broad geographic region as you outlined there. But I think in particular you'll find that there are areas in which the Iraqi security forces and coalition force presence is insufficient and that local volunteers are needed. And I think

that's what we're seeing across the country as individuals form neighborhood watch groups under this awakening program. Good question. Thank you. Yes, sir.

REP2: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Question. There has been an improve in the secur—in the power and electricity and we do know that. But what I understand that in one stage—in one neighborhood sometimes that—in one of the lines or in one of the places they receive over 12,000—12 hours and in other places they get less than that. Does that mean that there's kind of a chaos in the distribution of the electricity sometimes? At night we receive good power and electricity but at daytime there is a horrible shortage in electricity. So why is this happening?

RDML SMITH: General Dorko, I think, will address this issue.

BRIG GEN That's a great question. In distributing electricity in the nation, it's  
DORKO: done by a three-tiered approach that the Ministry of Electricity does. The first tier is for those facilities that are critical, like hospitals that need electricity 24 hours a day. There's a second tier below that of next critical facilities that receive electricity for 12 hours a day. And then for—after that residences and other businesses that aren't included maybe in the first two tiers. The rest

of the electricity is divided up. And to look at how electricity is parsed out around the country, it all depends where you are. If you are on the same circuit and near a facility that's a tier one facility that's receiving more power, you may benefit by that. But the switching of the electricity and the number of hours varies because I know we often quote that we take the aggregate amount of electricity that's produced in megawatt hours, divide by the number of hours in the day, and say that on average Baghdad is getting 13 hours a day. Some people are getting 24 hours a day and some people may be getting a few hours a day as you point out. But it all depends on how the circuits are arranged and how the electricity is moved around during the course of the day to ensure that one, depending on how generation is at a given point during the day, to be able to provide 100% to critical facilities like hospitals will require electricity to be moved around to some degree to ensure that those critical facilities get it which, of course, there—then there have to be some people further down in the order that would receive less.

RDML SMITH: And there's two issues, too, dealing with both the generation of power today which is at very high levels compared to the recent past, but also important is to note the demand. Demand has risen dramatically which you would expect as there's a recovery from

war. There's a greater demand that's on that infrastructure. You're not seeing the kind of advances one might see had the advance—had the demand signals not gone up. But there has been increased generation since 2003. Sir.

REP2: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: I meant by the question that there is a certain neighborhood but not one neighborhood. A certain neighborhood or mulhalla like in Zaina[ph] for instance. In one mulhalla, 740, we have three hospitals over there. There was a clinic and a hospital and there wasn't—and now they've built a new hospital or clinic so—about the distribution again.

BRIG GEN And I guess I couldn't specifically answer that question. I think the  
DORKO: Ministry of Electricity would best be in a position to show how electricity is distributed by circuits down to substations and how it's provided. And we don't necessarily have visibility of that because the Ministry of Electricity is responsible for operating the system nationally and, of course, that includes Baghdad and any other municipalities also. So the Ministry of Electricity would be best able to answer that because I wouldn't have any idea as to the rules and the distribution at that level.

RDML SMITH: But one thing I think we clearly understand is that for the average citizen out there, progress is seen by—in a couple of different dimensions and one of them truly is electricity and power. It is the lifeblood of much of what we do. It's how we live our lives. And so I know the Ministry of Electricity and the Gulf Region Division and others are focused on a long-term project which will take upwards of ten years or more to regenerate the ability of this nation to meet the demands it's seeing today. And it will be at some great expense to do so as well. But there is commitment to do it. And the Iraqi people are patient and we understand the frustration. But there are people out there working very hard to meet the needs. But thank you. Yes, sir.

REP3: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Question from al-Qura[ph] Iraq Newspaper. Admiral Smith, do you have any details regarding the incident that took place that is the opening fire about a bus that belongs to the Ministry of Finance?

RDML SMITH: Before coming over here I received a brief operational update on that particular issue. As I understand it, there was a bus that was operating—driving in a location on a particular street that was designed for car traffic only. That particular bus was approaching an area where a checkpoint or an observation tower observed the

bus again, as we understand it, on—in a lane that was reserved for car vehicles only. Fired warning shots at the bus and, as I understand it, the—some of that warning fire ricocheted and may have killed two to three individuals on the bus regrettably. Very regrettably. There is an investigation underway to determine exactly what happened; why the bus was there, why was it driving down a lane that was reserved for cars? And we'll learn more in the coming hours. But regrettably, there were civilians killed and I believe a few injured on that bus. Yes, ma'am.

REP4: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Question from—Admiral—question to Admiral Smith. You mentioned that one of Emir al-Qaeda was killed inside Iraq. Do you admit that there—do you depend on other people, rely on in some role or do you work on operations? Because the situation in Samarra is really deteriorating right now. Do you rely on the people or do you rely on operations?

RDML SMITH: To answer your question, the people I think are the most critical component of our operations. The individuals living in Samarra and elsewhere know who belongs in their neighborhoods and who does not. Much of the intelligence and much of the information that we



receive and the tips we receive are from local citizens who are fed up with the violence, who want to see al-Qaeda destroyed, and want them out of their neighborhoods. That said, there is a significant amount of intelligence that's gathered by both Iraqi security forces and by our own coalition forces to target al-Qaeda. And so as we work in Samarra and elsewhere to rid those neighborhoods of al-Qaeda, it is a mutual cooperative effort by both security forces and the people to work that problem very hard. Yes, sir.

REP5: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Admiral Smith, the Minister of Industry and Minerals announced a few months ago that there will be some investments for companies in Iraq. So what is your role in providing the necessary environment to bring the foreign investors inside Iraq especially that this whole issue has been delayed? And the Minister said at that time that this announcement or declaration will be until November. And so what is your role in bringing let's say foreign investors into Iraq?

RDML SMITH: Again, I think it's not our role as a coalition but it's our shared role with the Government of Iraq to generate enough security across the country where foreign investment is seen as an advantage to—by investors to come into Iraq and make that long-term commitment to the growth and development of much of the infrastructure that

General Dorko was referring to, private business development, employment opportunities. It is going to be largely a function of security in the near term. We are already starting to see significant interest by foreign investors in opportunities in the oil sector—not so much in the actual oil exploration or development—but all the subsidiary spin-off activities that are associated with the oil industry. Oil being the principal economic engine in Iraq will generate a great deal of secondary and third spin-off tiers of activity that foreign investors, foreign companies will want to be part of. And I believe they're starting to see some of that. And so I can't specifically address the level of today. I do know that Mr. Brinkley, Undersecretary of Defense for Economic Development, has briefed you before on this very issue and will do so routinely. So next time he's here, we'll make certain he addresses your specific issue. But I believe you're starting to see a significant interest and I think it's just a matter of time before economic development by foreign investors becomes a major fuel, if you will, that can drive the economy well into 2008 and beyond. Shukran. Yes, sir.

REP6: Asks question in Arabic.

INT: Question from Turkish News Agency. Question regarding Turkey. One of the Turkish leaders in Turkey said that two leaders from the PKK, two leaders from the PKK, Brotha[ph] Alton[ph] and—are

now actually inside the Green Zone. Is that true? Two leaders from the PKK are now inside the Green Zone. Is that true?

RDML SMITH: I'm not aware of any PKK members that are inside the Green Zone. Obviously PKK is a terrorist organization both designated by Turkey, Iraq, and the United States as being so. And I can't imagine a situation where PKK leadership was operating inside the Green Zone or would be residing in the Green Zone for any purpose other than their detention if that was the case. And I'm also not aware of any detention of any senior or, for that matter, any PKK leadership of the recent time. And so I would certainly look into it but I'm not aware of it. Well, if there are no further questions, I appreciate you being here today. I hope we provided you an outline of the information regarding our support of the Government of Iraq and their efforts to rebuild their infrastructure. A very vital component of this is the investment that we talked about both from a coalition point of view but also foreign investment. I appreciate the time and effort you took to get here today and we'll see you later this week. Thank you so much.